

# THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

No. 417.]

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 22, 1859.

[PRICE 1d.]



"IS HE WORSE?" HIS MOTHER COOLLY INQUIRED. "HE IS DEAD!"

## THE FORLORN SHOP; AND THE STORY OF ITS TENANTS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE dying man had no sooner murmured those words, than the whole love which I had borne him vanished on the instant. They were not only the knell of his life, but of my attachment. As an apparently generous being, he had won my affection;

but when his own lips revealed to me (as I hastily concluded) the false wretch he really was, my heart submitted to be soothed without a regret. When I raised my head from the position in which I had placed it, in order to catch his dying words, I was as cool and as calm as I am now. Passion had fled; reason remained, and told me that it was better to see the dead truth, rudely perhaps, but at once stretched out before me, than to live in the daily

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cherishing of a living lie. For a minute, just for a minute, joy at my brother's innocence was tempered with a feeling of regret at Alfred's deceit. I closed his still eyes, covered his warm corpse, and slowly took my way down-stairs. His mother was in the parlour knitting.

"Is he worse?" she inquired.

"He is dead."

She put down her work deliberately and, I thought, unfeelingly, slightly bowed to me, and, tearless and collected, went up to her dead son. The servant, who was on the kitchen stairs, breathless with anticipation, wanted, I could plainly see, to interrogate me. I took no notice, however, but quietly opened the street door and passed out. The rain, which had descended lightly at first, now came down in a sharp shower. Ellen, either apprehensive that I should get wet, or anxious to hear my intelligence, had left my mother, and was waiting with an umbrella. I took her arm in silence, my brain being already busy with schemes to secure my brother's return. So, when Ellen spoke of Alfred, I merely said to her, as I had said to his mother, "He is dead."

The truth is, I had a sort of indefinite idea that the success of my application for the release of my brother depended on the exact words used by Alfred. I therefore resolved to embed the whole circumstances in my mind while yet they were fresh, so that at any moment I should be able to narrate them precisely and exactly.

Ellen had lighted a fire before she went out, so that on our return we were welcomed by a cheerful blaze. I sat beside the fire, changed my shoes, which were very wet, and before I went to bed related each circumstance to Ellen, minutely and repeatedly. I believe my sister felt Alfred's perfidy more than I did, for as I lay awake the whole night, revolving the events in my mind, I could hear her sobbing until the morning came, when from sheer exhaustion she fell asleep.

I knew my brother was innocent; I knew it when he declared it in that dismal dock; I doubly knew it now; but they wouldn't believe me—they wouldn't believe me.

The principal of the office in which Alfred had been employed, plainly told me that my suspicions were unfounded; that the charge against my brother had been too clearly proved to admit the faintest shadow of a doubt. I sent to George, begging him to reveal the truth, or at least to hint at some means by which the truth might be discovered; but he sent no reply; cruel brother, no reply!

I petitioned the Home Secretary. After many weeks I received a printed form, which merely stated that, on due examination, there was nothing in the circumstances to justify a reversal of the sentence. So you see, sir, do what I could, they wouldn't believe me.

The term of our Dalston house was on the very eve of expiration before we could determine on our future movements. As nothing else seemed to offer, we resolved on taking a small business. This place appearing to us in a good situation, and the rent being very low, we made up our minds to take it; but what with the expense of moving, and

having to pay for the fixtures in advance, we had so very little left to stock the shop, that instead of being a help, it has been a burden, and a very sad and heavy one. When our present landlord asked for a reference, I had really no one to give. We at last hit upon the curate of the parish. We had always been as regular in our attendance at his church as my mother's malady would allow us, and on several occasions he had called upon us. I had, however, never encouraged his visits, for, to say the truth, I had found him more inquisitive than consoling. He readily agreed to be our reference, with an appearance of kindness asked me how we were getting on, and even expressed his regret at our removal. He gave us some wholesome commonplace advice, and warned us, in a sort of half-friendly manner, of the sin which attended the circulation of malicious reports. I was much startled by such a remark. I was then for the first time informed that Mrs. Wright, having heard, as she might readily have done, that I had declared her son guilty of the crime for which my brother was suffering, branded it as a base attempt on my part to obtain his liberty at the expense of her dead son's reputation. I of course indignantly repudiated such a charge, and carefully related the circumstances to the curate. My manner convinced him, I suppose, of my integrity; but he assured me that Alfred could not have participated in such a crime. He expatiated on the many virtues of his character, to which my heart, somehow, could not help bearing a modified reluctant witness. My visitor suggested, in conclusion, that no stress could be laid on the fragmentary words, which I had interpreted as Alfred's self-accusation.

For the first time it seemed as though my old affection was returning. For the first time I began to sincerely mourn the dead, and the necessity for immediate removal diverted, or I should perhaps say, confused my ideas; and it was not till I felt the unspeakable misery of a public shop—watching for customers who never came—when any one stopped at our wretched window, indulging in speculations which were always doomed to be disappointed—it was not, I say, till then that the truth seemed present to my almost broken heart. I could see then, and at times can see now, Alfred pale and dying; the flicker of the candle, the glazed look of his once brilliant eye, as his hand was stiffening in mine, are clear and distinct before me, when a trumpet voice vibrates in my ear, as though it would rouse me from a dangerous dream—the voice of a brother protesting his innocence.

Such was the story of the two sisters. I hastily promised to do all in my power to aid them, and, with my mind somewhat in a whirl, went home. Feeling too confused to develope any plan of action that night, I went to bed as quietly and quickly as possible; and though the thoughts consequent on their tale haunted me the whole of the next day, it was not till the evening, when I returned from the city, that, after my conventional chop and kidney, I closed my shutters, although it was still light, drew my curtains, lit my lamp, stirred my fire, and sat down for a determined "think."

It is better for me at once to admit that I was the most incompetent person in the world for the task I had undertaken. My readers, I doubt not, already see the solution of the mystery which busied and worried me for many days. I can therefore only presume to detail the steps by which I ultimately surmounted my difficulty.

The barrister who defended George was on circuit; but the boy who was left in the office remembered the case, and the name of the solicitor who got it up. From the latter I ascertained the whole of the facts. Printed orders for the sale of stock at a certain price, after receiving the signatures of two of the directors in the board-room, were sent by the secretary to the residence of Mr. Elphick, a third director, for his signature also. Mr. Elphick, I should say, was ill and confined to his house. It being a service of some responsibility, George was the messenger employed on the occasion. One hundred £100 shares were sent. Mr. Elphick only signed ninety-nine, and the numbers were duly entered in his private ledger. The discrepancy remained for a long time undiscovered; but at last, a suspicion being aroused, a searching investigation was instituted, and the missing share traced and found. Mr. Elphick's signature was a miserable forgery, the others undoubtedly genuine. It was George who carried the parcel from the board-room to Mr. Elphick, and from that gentleman's house to the secretary. Who, then, could have abstracted it but he? When charged with it, he did not certainly confess his crime; nor did he positively deny it. The attorney assured me that he must have been guilty, and in my own mind I half agreed in his opinion.

It was obviously impossible for me to continue my inquiries and attend to my business; so I mentioned to my partner my intention of absenting myself for a fortnight. He seemed very much astonished. I persisted in my resolution, however; and though I was away more than ten days, I did not, I am bound to say, find the business so very much in arrear on my return.

Now, two things struck me, as they must have occurred to my readers long since; first, it would have been as easy for George to have abstracted the scrip when he was bringing it away from Mr. Elphick, as before, when he was taking it to him. Such a course would have saved him both the trouble and the risk of a deliberate forgery. Again, where did the money go to? The forged document brought in nearly one hundred pounds: who received it? Then—which I should have mentioned in its place—the wealthy and respectable firm to whom the share was traced, could only account for its possession by asserting that money had been advanced on it to a gentleman, an old client, who was recently deceased. In short, it seemed to my mind, prejudiced perhaps in his favour, that there was no legal case against George after all.

Was it, then, Alfred? I discovered that, just about the time of the forgery, he had been more than ordinarily flush of money. He had purchased many things in the neighbourhood—clothes, a gold

watch and chain, and so on. It must have been he. He was not the chivalrous youth I had for a moment—just for a moment—supposed him, but a mean, pitiful thief, after all. Determined to prosecute this clue, I went to his office and mentioned my suspicion. From the principal to the lowest clerk, I was assured that it was erroneous, and that, indeed, Alfred was closely engaged the whole of that particular day, and could not possibly have had access to the scrip at all.

At fault again.

I was so much fatigued and bothered, that I began really to fancy that it would be more convenient to condemn George, and let the investigation drop. After dinner that day, I resolved to banish the affair from my mind, and take a walk in the cool evening. Just as I was going out, thinking of anything but the real matter, chatting to my landlady on some indifferent subject, I suddenly caught the real clue to the mystery. I was thoughtless enough to rush out without an umbrella—fortunately there was no likelihood of rain; hurried to the sisters in a violent perspiration, and asked them for the clothes—the dress suit which George had purchased. They both of them blushed deeply. I was foolish to ask such a question: "Were they obtainable? Had they any portion of them?" "None." I was turning away disappointed, when Ellen said something about buttons. It appeared that the tailor had sewn buttons on the bottom of the trousers; but, as straps were then going out of fashion, George had cut them off. Ellen, thinking that they might be useful at some future period, kept them. With some trouble they were found: they were sufficient—I had the clue.

#### AN ALARM OF INVASION.

WE have latterly been contemplating the probabilities of invasion, and speculating on the prospect of the horrors of war in the midst of our own homes. A stir has been making as to the condition of our defences on the coast, the efficiency of our fleets, and the alleged paucity of the troops which we could oppose to an invading force. As a result of investigations which had to be made, it has been decreed that we are to strengthen our wooden walls, to increase our land fortifications, to enrol volunteer corps of riflemen and artillerymen, and in various other ways to put ourselves in such a position for doing mischief to an enemy, as may operate to deter any hostile armament from attempting a landing on our shores. This is all right and proper; for there is no surer mode of maintaining peace, than by maintaining a thorough capacity for war. Weakness in a nation is always a temptation to rapine and spoliation, and to be secure from attack, a people must be known to be strong to defend. If our volunteer rifle and artillery corps become disciplined and efficient, they will do the work of armies without fighting, and may win for us all that we want, which is peace and quietness, by the mere moral effect of their prowess.

The very last thing which Englishmen of the

present day would be disposed to put up with, would be the invasion of their territory by a foreign foe. We are not a shade more tolerant in that article than were our grandsires of sixty years ago; and what they thought, and how they acted, when invasion was the business to be dealt with, may be gathered in some small degree from the following story, which my old grandad, who has been gathered to his rest for more than thirty years, was wont to tell. I cannot pretend to give it in his own words, after the lapse of so long a period, but in substance it will be the same; and I shall make him the narrator, because I seem to see him now, as he laughed over the recollections it awakened, and to hear again some of his own peculiar forms of expression. I may premise of him, that he was a stout Suffolk yeoman, "standing six feet high without his shoes," a thorough adept in all agricultural knowledge, and strong enough to lift from the ground a quarter of a ton weight.

"I was living then," said the old gentleman, "at my old farm near Thordon. It was the time of the flat-bottomed boats, when Master Boney had got a couple of hundred thousand men in his camp at Boulogne, and was only waiting for a chance to bring 'em over here, and cut us all into mince-meat. Our fellows kept an eye on 'em, however, and they never embarked on that venture after all. But everybody here made sure they would come; and unless you should live to see a threatened invasion yourself, you can never have any idea of the state of people's minds at such a time. We were all soldiers then; my carters were militia-men, and thousands of labourers were drilled to use the pike. Many a time I've gone to market in my uniform, for want of time to shift after exercise; we wore it on Sundays too, in case of surprise, and we practised with powder and ball three times a week. Some of us began to get hungry for the sight of a Frenchman to shoot, and to feel a contempt for Boney, because he delayed to put his threat into execution. The women were terribly frightened, and could never be satisfied that the house was bolted and barred enough at night—as though they imagined Buonaparte to be a burglar.

"My house was five-and-twenty miles from the coast; but there were beacon-fires ready to be lighted at regular stations, all the way to the sea, as well as all along the shore up away to Yarmouth and beyond; while down south there were still more, ready to spread the intelligence of a landing all through the country, the moment it should take place. It was about the middle of September; the harvest had been late that year, and I had just carried all my wheat, when Tom Catchpole and his brother Reuben came over to ours for a day's shooting. Your uncle George and I took our guns and went with them, and had a rather hard day's sport among the stubbles: then we came back to drill in the afternoon, for a couple of hours, and were pretty well knocked up by supper-time. The Catchpoles stayed to sleep, intending to shoot their way back to their farm in the morning. We sat up pretty late, talking of the sport we had had, and of the war, and saying a good many bold things about Master Boney, and how we should like to settle his

affairs for him. I doubt we should have made short work of him if we could have had our way.

"It must have been past midnight, when I was roused out of a deep sleep by a loud thumping at my bed-room door. 'Who's there?' I bawled.

"'Look out of the window, Barnard,' said the voice of Tom Catchpole, 'and tell us what it means.'

"I looked out at once, and there to be sure was the beacon on the hill all a-glow, and the flame rising higher and higher every minute; and away in the distance I could see other fires a-gleaming, some so far off, they looked like little sparks, and others flaming up quite grandly.

"'It means,' said I to Tom, 'that the rascally French are landed, and that we must go and drive them back. Raise the house, while I put on my clothes.'

"I had hardly spoken the words, when your grandmother, scared out of her sleep, threw herself on my neck with a scream, and wanted me to promise sacredly that I would not leave her. It was piteous to see her in such mortal terror, and it took me half an hour to bring her to her senses, and to make her see what was her duty and mine at such a moment. I pacified her at last, by consenting that your uncle George, who was then but sixteen, should stay with her; and then I went down into the yard. There I found the Catchpoles, and six or eight of the neighbours, all mounted, and my nag standing ready for me. We that were mounted were all well armed, and in the road were a mixed troop of all sorts, some with pikes, some with old fowling-pieces, some with scythe-blades bound to poles, and some with nothing better than stout stakes and cudgels. It was nearly as dark as pitch, for the clouds were spitting rain, and it was not an easy matter to see our way. Tom Catchpole, who was fond of following the hounds, took the lead, and before long we got into the road to Framlingham. Here we left our infantry to get on as fast as they could, and pushed on ourselves in the direction of the coast. We had not gone a mile before we were in the middle of another and a larger party, clattering along on roadsters and cart-horses, and plunging and galloping like mad, at six or seven miles an hour! They hailed us, and we knew some of the voices, but wouldn't stop: on we pushed now towards a new beacon, that suddenly flashed up ahead; but our speed was soon checked by a fresh troop, as oddly mounted as the other, and whose numbers choked up the way. The darkness was so great that we lost one another; and now it was every man for himself, and a helter-skelter race, as thick as colts in the ring at a cattle-fair. Every mile that we advanced, our progress became slower than it had been before, and by the time we had been two hours on the road, we had got to about a walking pace, and we knew by the tramping, and bawling, and cheering, that resounded far away, both in front and rear, that the whole country was up and on the road, and that all the world was come out to battle. The rain began to fall pretty freely before dawn, but nobody thought of that, or of anything else but the furious desire that possessed us to get on. With the first faint glimmer of daybreak, I spurred my horse over the



hedge, to get clear of the ruck, and was joined directly by Tom Catchpole. We succeeded in collecting some of our party, and six of us started off across country, in the direction of Aldborough, where we knew by this time that the first beacon had been fired. We reached the coast in the morning twilight, and, galloping to the nearest rising ground, looked out over the dim, drab-coloured sea, for the fleet of the invaders. To our intense mortification and chagrin, there was not a sign of them to be seen; the whole coast was clear of all, save a few fishing boats, as far as the eye could reach, both north and south. Out in the offing, about two miles distant, lay a man-of-war at anchor, with not an inch of canvas spread—a spectacle which informed us at once that we had been fooled by a false alarm, and that all our good patriotism had been thrown away.

"We rode up to the beacon, the brands of which were still burning faintly, but those who had fed the flame all night had vanished with the morning light, and the spot was deserted. It was but too plain that we had been hoaxed, and that the beacon-men had made themselves scarce, to escape the effects of our indignation. We were soon joined by the advanced guard of the miscellaneous host who were coming on by the various roads, and they were forced to the same conclusion as ourselves. There was now nothing to be done but to return, and inform the main body of the true state of the case. A few of us who were the best mounted undertook this ungrateful task, and spurred off in different directions, to intercept the advancing squadrons of horsemen. You should have heard the derisive yells with which the intelligence was received, and the designations which were bestowed on the recreant French for declining to make their appearance. It was no easy matter to check the general advance; those who had ridden all night to strike a desperate blow, did not choose to be turned back with a word, and though the rumour of the real fact spread rapidly, hundreds would come in and see for themselves; and a rare scene of confusion and hubbub, not without some mixture of quarrelling and ill-blood, followed the unwelcome discovery.

"But the best of the joke remained behind; and perhaps it was well that it was so, for the laughter and raillery that ensued upon the revelations of daylight put an end to the wrangling, and set everybody good-humouredly laughing at his neighbour, except perhaps a few, who were too much the butts of their comrades' merriment. When it became light enough to see what was what, it appeared that some of our agricultural patriots, in their haste to gobble up a Frenchman or two, had been quite incapable of thinking of anything else. Thus, numbers of them had not waited to draw on their boots, but, thrusting their feet into anything, or nothing, had mounted slipshod, slipped, and even barefoot. Others, in their haste to arm, had forgotten their ammunition, and came out to shoot without gunpowder or bullets. My neighbour, farmer Ireton, had ridden forth in his red night-cap. Reuben Catchpole, who was always a rather misty sort of body, had drawn on his leather inexpressibles

wrong side foremost. Old Carden, the blacksmith, had dressed in the dark without his shirt, and then put that on last; and nearly every other man you met had made some blunder in his trappings, accoutrements, or costume. All this, of course, made a great deal of fun; and if fun could have filled a man's stomach, that would have been a day of general feasting. But now, notwithstanding there was no enemy, came the hardships of a campaign. Our horses were knocked up by the rough-riding of the night, and were in no condition to carry us home in a hurry; some of us were thirty miles from our cupboards; we were all as hungry as hunters, and had nothing to eat. The cravings of appetite, more than anything else, cowed our spirits as the day wore on; we had never thought of a commissariat; and now the only thing to be done was for each man to forage for himself as he best might. For my part, I did well enough; my nag had pluck and bottom, and carried me to the Catchpoles by noon, and there I remained for the rest of the day.

"When the circumstances of the alarm came to be inquired into, it was found that, although we had been hoaxed, the hoax had not been intentional. The beacon-men had been deceived by a bonfire made by a party of idle boys in the direct line between their beacon and the next along-shore. They had discovered their mistake, but not until it was too late to rectify it, when, in answer to their signal, all the beacon-fires in the neighbourhood were blazing around them.

"Somehow, though people of course laughed at us, we got no discredit by that turn-out in the night. It did no harm in the end to anybody, and I was always of opinion that it did some good. After that, though the talk of invasion and the rumours about Boney were as plentiful as ever, they did not trouble us half as much; the women especially plucked up courage, knowing, as they had good reason, that if they were attacked they would not want for defenders, and that if the Frenchmen did show their noses here, they would have to give a good account of the gentlemen before they obtained an introduction to the ladies."

So much for my grandad's yarn. I may add, that the above was not the only instance in which, by the accidental or wanton firing of beacons in the night, the Englishmen of that day were roused from their beds and sallied forth with alacrity to repel an imaginary invader. A similar circumstance occurred on the Devonshire coast not long after; more than once were Scottish volunteers summoned to a midnight muster; and among the stout Welshmen of Glamorganshire the same kind of alarm elicited the same demonstrations of loyalty and patriotism.

#### A MORNING AT THE MANSION HOUSE.

THE Mansion House of the city of London enjoys a world-wide reputation for the magnificence of its architecture, the gorgeoussness of its apartments, and the splendour of its entertainments. Thither, at certain periods of the year, flock some of the most distinguished persons of the day, to partake of right

princely hospitality. The members of the Cabinet and their aristocratic associates in both Houses of Parliament; the Judges, Magistrates, and members of the Bar of England; the Archbishops and Bishops, well supported by the clergy who may be honoured with invitations from the City King; the different wards composing the Common Council of the City, repair in full costume to the Egyptian Hall, and amid sound of trumpets, and surrounded by hosts of liveried servants, sit down to the banquet.

But this is only one aspect of the Mansion House; it has its dark side, where no holiday thoughts are permitted. There is a justice-room, where the Lord Mayor has to pass sentence upon his unfortunate and criminal fellow creatures. Underneath the justice-room is what the policemen call the bird cage, where the prisoners await, either their trial or the van that is to convey them to Newgate; and near to the bird cage is a room crowded with cutlasses, fire-arms, and handcuffs, plainly indicating the doom those may anticipate who endeavour to escape. In the drawing-rooms above, all is poetical and fascinating, and to the sound of cheerful music all goes merry as a marriage bell; but below is the stern prose of uneducated and unregenerate life, where felons and forgers, burglars and pickpockets, youthful and veteran rogues, gnash their teeth in their disappointment at being found out.

It has been my painful duty to spend many a morning in the justice-room, and to witness scenes which, if I could photograph in words, as they are imprinted upon my memory, would, I humbly think, do much to deter persons from crime, and encourage integrity. Seated upon the bench, about five minutes before twelve o'clock, on what the officers of the court call a very "full morning"—one when the number of prisoners to be tried, and appeals to be listened to, is unusually large—I began to take notes of what was transpiring around me. The reporters were sharpening their pencils, the detectives had a secret cunning on their faces, that seemed to defy penetration; the policemen, some with bruised heads, and some as fresh and healthy as if they had just left their bath, were comparing each others' adventures; the clerks beneath the judicial chair were chatting confidentially with the lawyers and barristers who had cases in hand, and the hum of people's voices was waxing louder and louder, when suddenly a curiously cloaked figure, bearing a wand surmounted by the city arms, appeared at the door, and in a voice which was quite intended to be dignified, exclaimed, "Room for the Right Honorable the Lord Mayor!" and in violet, lavender, blue, or crimson robe, as the order of the day may determine, with a weighty and splendid gold chain, supporting his own coat of arms upon his breast, the Chief Magistrate advances to his chair. The officials, and gentlemen of the legal profession, rise and bow; then silence is proclaimed in a stentorian voice, by the keeper of the charge sheet, although the court is perfectly still; and his lordship, glancing over the business of the morning, the details of which have been copied into a book which lies before him, signifies by a nod that he is ready to commence.

As by magic, but with an astounding bang—officials, whether at the railway-station, or in the Mansion House, seem incapable of doing anything gently—with an astounding bang, a trap-door at the head of the staircase leading from the bird cage I have mentioned, springs open, and with a policeman by his side appears a young man of about twenty years of age. As he takes his stand in the dock, and as all eyes are fixed upon him, there is a quivering about his lips, indicating intense excitement; on his brow the perspiration hangs in clammy globules, and the forced smile that he assumes, to declare his indifference to the charge, and his innocence of any offence, throws over his features an unmistakable expression of guilt.

"I appear in this case, my lord, for the prosecution," says a barrister, rising.

A most painful case it is; the prisoner has forged cheques to the amount of more than £500, and up to within a week of his being taken into custody, had been what is called a successful cheat; but, overtaken at last, he finds that the most clever of all his frauds, the very last he had committed, was the one to bring him to justice. With distinct minuteness, he hears every item in his perfidy described. To accomplish his design of getting his last cheque cashed at the bank, he had adopted a most ingenious disguise, and when commanded to assume it, by the Lord Mayor, for the purpose of identification, the prisoner looked quite a different person—his slouched hat, and his thick beard and moustache, making him appear full ten years' older; but the eagle eye of a detective had seen through this masquerade, clever as it was, and in the very moment of success, and while the bright gold glittered in his hand, the young criminal was tapped upon the shoulder and taken into custody. Of course he was committed for trial, and he has since been transported.

The trap-door flew open again, and a still younger prisoner appeared at the bar.

"This case, my Lord Mayor," said a solicitor engaged for the defence, "is one of the most painful I have ever had to do with."

It was indeed a most sad one. In the witness-box stood a grey-haired man, whose tears flowed in torrents down his furrowed cheeks, while at the bar, with cold and insulting indifference, stood a lad of about sixteen. Alas! the aged man in the witness-box was the father of the youth at the bar; he was compelled to give evidence against his own son; he had missed large sums of money, day after day, and little suspecting that the culprit was one belonging to his own family, he had instituted the strictest inquiries, and set a most vigilant constable on the watch; the result was, that his own boy was discovered to be the thief. In vain the wretched father attempted to shield him; the case had passed into the hands of the police, and it was at their peril if they hushed it up; nor could the Lord Mayor, from a sense of public justice, yield to the entreaties of either the solicitor or the father, to acquit the prisoner. He was committed for trial, while his heart-broken parent, in almost a senseless state, was carried out of court by the officials.

The dock is filled again. This time, a weeping girl, of about seventeen years of age, with most woo-begone features, and in scanty attire, stands accused of having attempted her own life, by throwing herself over one of the bridges the preceding evening. She had been rescued from a watery grave by a courageous boatman, and was sufficiently strong to be brought up before the court this morning. The most severe magistrate in the kingdom could scarcely have had heart enough to say anything very stern to such a poor bewildered creature. She concealed her face with her hands and wept bitterly, and convulsive sobs were for a time the only answers she could give to the questions put to her. She was a stranger in the great city, having only come from the country about a month previously.

"Have you any friends in London, my poor girl?" asks the Lord Mayor, kindly.

"None," is the hysterical response.

"Have you any friends or relations, to whom you can be sent, and who will see that you do not act so rashly again?"

"Father and mother are both dead, sir; I was their only child!"

Even those who are no strangers to the most distressing scenes, could not help being moved by a reply so pathetically and so despairingly given.

"Let her be well taken care of," was all that the magistrate could say; and this time the keeper of the trap-door closed it gently, and almost noiselessly. There was a slight pause, and silence reigned through the court, which, after a moment or two, was broken by a most inharmonious bellowing, succeeded by a scuffling of feet below the trap-door.

"Shure and I'll come quiet enough if yez will only lave me to mesel. It's mesel as'll be glad to see his honnurr this fine morning!"

These words were spoken while the person who uttered them still remained out of sight; but immediately there started up a young Irishwoman, with a bruise upon her forehead, who, rushing into the witness-box, exclaimed at her loudest:—

"Stop till his honnurr sees yer face, ye spalpeen!" Of course a scene was expected, and soon it came in full force. Few could keep from laughing, as a red-haired, red-faced, red-jacketed young Irishman, with a broad grin overspreading his features, ambled into the dock and with arms a-kimbo, and not the slightest particle of fear about him, stood fronting his lordship.

"Plaze yer honnurr," he said, pulling his shaggy hair, "that's my wife whom I love from my heart most intirely."

"You have a strange way of showing it, then," said the Mayor; "but I'll hear you presently. Are you his wife?" addressing the young woman.

"Alack! and it's thrue what you say," she answered; and now she burst out into such a vehement strain of indignation as literally to put at defiance the pencils of the reporters. According to her, Tim Kennedy, her husband, was the worst of fellows and the best of men; the cruellest husband and the most affectionate of fathers; but then he would sometimes strike her, the baste as he was, and she

had brought him up for his honour to spake to him.

"Shure and I am glad to spake to yer honnurr," cries Tim.

"For this, your offence, you must be severely punished. What have you got to say in answer to the charge?"

To which question the Irishman replied with an eloquence that far surpassed that of his wife, reciprocating her affection in figurative terms that only those belonging to his country have at their command, but not at all retaliating upon her on account of her hard speeches against himself.

"And it's Biddy hersel as'll say I never harm her, except when I come from the wakes, and they only come once a week, bad luck to 'em. Last night I only just tapped her upon the brow in the ardour of my affection, because where I come from, yer honnurr, we often take up the sticks against those we like best."

"For this, your offence, you must go to prison—"

A cry of amazement, and even of horror, escaped the lips of the wife, who, rushing forward to where Tim was standing, cried out in anguish: "O, yer honnurr, good yer honnurr, I only wanted you to spake to him; he is such a good man to me and the childer!"

Tim had grown as pale as death; but, now bursting into tears he said, "And is it to prison I am to go, Biddy? O, the childer, the childer!"

A scene now followed that baffles description; such blubbing on the part of Tim, such entreaties to the Lord Mayor on the part of the wife, who never dreamt that Tim would be really punished. But as space forbids any further reference to this case, I will just sum it up by saying that the husband was eventually bound over to keep the peace, and that they left the court the best friends imaginable.

In the trial of such cases the morning wore away. It was indeed a very full morning, in the language of the court; such a variety of crimes and offences I had never before seen crowded into one sitting of a magistrate. Young pickpockets were there, charged with all imaginable kinds of sleight-of-hand—taking handkerchiefs from the coat, watch-guards and watches from the vest, and purses wherever they were to be found. They seemed to have a scent for property, and even from the lining of the coat did one young thief ferret it out. One could only pray that all the skill they showed in the ways of dishonesty might soon be employed in the direction of virtue. There was no lack of intelligence amongst any of these young criminals, as was manifest from the clever way in which they cross-examined witnesses and defended themselves; but their guilty hardihood, their total disregard for truth, their evident love of the ways of dishonesty, were quite appalling. Young clerks and warehousemen, too, were brought up, charged with pilfering from tills and drawers, and giving in only part of the money they had received at the counters. In the case of many of them it transpired that their dishonest gains went to the gaming-table and to the betting-book, and that they were induced to



THE JUSTICE ROOM, AT THE MANSION HOUSE.

keep on in the ways of theft by the delusive hope that by some venturesome throw they would win enough to repay what they had taken. Husbands and fathers had to answer to charges of cruelty and desertion; many who appeared, seemed to be dead to all the ties of natural affection, and only desirous of being freed from the wives they had sworn to cherish, and from the children it ought to have been their most valued privilege to have brought up in the ways of happiness, usefulness, and religion. Drunkards were brought up, their entire system trembling under the influence of long-continued dissipation. Some of them were known not many years ago to have kept their carriages, and to have had at their command every luxury that wealth could purchase; but now they were best known at the gin palace and the pawnbroker's shop; and one prisoner, who a few years ago had his seventy thousand pounds, was charged with stealing a coat from a little boy and selling it in Petticoat Lane for a trifle, which he immediately spent in strong drink. Brawlers in the courts and alleys of the metropolis, sleepers in the dark arches, quarrelsome neighbours, cabmen dissatisfied with their fares, or fares dissatisfied with cabmen, and sum-

moning them for impertinence and overcharge; omnibus men for furious driving, and carters for going to sleep on their waggons; orange girls and comb-sellers, who have offended the police; Billingsgate notorieties, for using their peculiar dialect and throwing not very fresh fish at passengers through the market; blind, lame, and dumb beggars, who will not move on, but keep infesting certain localities because they reap a good harvest there by their pretended calamities; masters of work-houses and unions, because they will not admit the poor; carmen for stealing sacks, or for having them in their possession without being able satisfactorily to account for them; organ grinders, and hurdy-gurdy players, for annoying quietly disposed mathematicians and diligent literary men: these, all these, and many more than these, come in their turn day after day before the Lord Mayor in the justice-room, and with all of them he has to deal as justly as he can. If he is a thoughtful man, the contrast between the life of the state drawing-room and that of the justice-room must give rise to painful reflections.

I confess I can never pass the Mansion House now, without earnestly desiring that the wealth,



talent, and influence of all those who assemble from time to time in the upper part of the house, may be brought healthfully to bear upon the unfortunate and guilty creatures who only receive the hospitality of the jailor, whose drawing-room is the bird cage, and whose state carriage is the prison van. The Mansion House will not be less splendid when deprived of its justice-room, and the chief magistrate will not be less dignified when he has no prisoners brought before him to try and sentence.

### PLUM PUDDING.

FOR centuries Christmas has been looked upon as our "joyful'st feast;" a time it is when, as George Withers sings—

"Our neighbours' chimneys smoke,  
And Christmas blocks are burning;  
Their ovens they with baked meat choke,  
And all their spits are turning."

In the seventeenth century, it would appear that a "pie" was considered indispensable for the due celebration of Christmas. Misson, in his "Travels in England," says: "Every family against Christmas makes a famous pye, which they call Christmas Pye. It is a great nostrum; the composition of this pasty is a most learned mixture of neats' tongues, chicken, eggs, sugar, raisins, lemon, and orange-peel, various kinds of spicery, etc." Brand tells us that, in the "north country," a goose was always the chief ingredient of the pie. Sometimes the pie was made of monstrous dimensions: one was made, in 1770, at Howick, for Sir Henry Grey, and shipped at Berwick for London. The contents of this wondrous pie were, two bushels of flour, twenty pounds of butter, four geese, two turkeys, two rabbits, four wild ducks, two woodcocks, six snipes, four partridges, two neats' tongues, two curlews, seven blackbirds, and six pigeons. It was nearly nine feet in circumference at bottom, weighed about twelve stone, and took two men to place it on table. It was neatly fitted with a case and four small wheels, to facilitate its use by every guest who partook of its contents.

Of course the poets took especial notice of this national dish. Herrick, for example, interested himself for its safety:—

"Come, guard this night the Christmas pye,  
That the thief, though ne'er so sly,  
With his flesh-hooks don't come nigh  
To catch it."

The traveller from whom we have already quoted says, that besides the famous pie at Christmas, "they also make a sort of soup with plums, which is not at all inferior to the pye, which is, in their language, called *plum porridge*." Stevenson, in his "Twelve Months," published in 1861, has the following passage: "Now a journeyman cares not a rush for his master, though he begs his *plum porridge* all the twelve days." In "Poor Robin's Almanac" for 1695, there is a carol beginning thus:—

"Now thrice welcome, Christmas,  
Which brings us good cheer,  
Minced pies and *plum-porridge*,  
Good ale and strong beer," etc.

Ancient cookery books give full descriptions of this plum porridge. In Carter's "Complait Cook," published in 1730, there is the following recipe:—

"First make a good stock of broth of beef and mutton, no veal; make it strong; season it with some whole pepper, cloves, and mace, cinnamon, ginger, and a bunch of sweet herbs; boil it down well, and strain for use. Then boil off some good prunes, pulp and strain them out into your broth; then grate some kitchen bread into it, and stove that and your prunes together. Then put in a bottle of claret. Then put in raisins picked and currants washed, a good many, and stove them off while plumpt. Then season it well with sugar. Some put in musk and sack, and amber prepared. Lay on some boiled prunes, and place round some slices of lemon, having first squeezed a lemon over it."

It thus appears that plum porridge was a *soup*; doubtless a savoury dish. It was our forefathers' substitute for PUDDING.

The first glimmering which we have been able to obtain of the modern plum pudding is in a popular cookery book, published in 1714, which gives this receipt for "a most excellent plum pudding:—" "Take one pound of suet, shred very small and sifted; one pound of raisins, stoned; four spoonfuls of flour, and four spoonfuls of sugar; five eggs, but three whites; beat the eggs with a little salt; tie it up close, and boil it four hours at least."

This is what we, in our advanced state of culinary civilization, regard as a simple suet dumpling; how far removed it is from that intricate and complex conception—a Christmas pudding—with its boundless variety of delicacies and oriental magnificence of spices, need scarcely to be pointed out. The one was but the rude sketch, the timid venture, the modest audacity of that which hereafter became the realized ideal—the astonishment of Europe.

For a long time, however, plum porridge continued to sway the appetites of our forefathers and foremothers, notwithstanding its rival. Brand says: "I dined at the chaplain's table at Saint James's on Christmas day, 1801, and partook of the first thing served and eaten on that festival at that table, *i. e.*, a tureen full of rich luscious *plum porridge*." And we are informed by Hudson Turner that, until the accession of George IV, "this savoury porridge used to be given away to the lords-in-waiting, maids-of-honour, and other domestics of the royal palaces. Sixty quarts were made at St. James's for the general supply."

It would be very difficult to trace the successful career of plum pudding. In the middle of the eighteenth century it was only conspiring, slowly gaining strength for the revolution it was about to effect. To its eggs and raisins, it ventured, in 1747, on the addition of currants—an innovation to be marked. By successive innovations were added candied lemon-peel, citron, spices, brandy, and, lo! the pudding had its throne upon the Christmas board. It has become our national dish. It represents us in the imagination of foreigners, who believe that we eat little else but *ros bif* and *plum poodang*.

Foreigners appear to be very unfortunate in their attempts to make plum pudding. A friend was at Dresden a few years since, and there some German officers desired to have an English plum pudding. The recipe was obtained. On being served up, however, to his surprise he found it brought on in a *tureen*. The directions said nothing about a cloth, and so a porridge was the result. This was just a repetition of the scene which is said to have occurred at the Hague, when Lord Stair was ambassador in the reign of Charles II. According to this tradition, each ambassador ordered his national dish—Lord Stair, a plum pudding. The pudding was named as “England’s Representative of Cookery.” Unmindful of superintending all the details, to the dismay of his lordship, the pudding was *not* boiled in a cloth, but served up in a dish. The tradition, however, is contradicted by facts, there being no evidence—as far as our research has gone—of plum pudding in the time of Charles II.

#### THE ENGLISH YARD AND FRENCH METRE.

If I were a great king or emperor, an individual of wide domains, and power commensurate; if my will were the only law, and nobody durst say me nay; what should prevent me fixing on my arm as the standard of measurement throughout all my broad dominions? Who should prevent me sending to my mathematical instrument maker, commanding him to make a measuring rod of that particular length? Why, nothing, and nobody. This is just what our Henry I did; and thus originated our old English standard yard measure, subdivided afterwards, each yard into three feet, each foot into twelve inches, and each inch into three barleycorns—the latter a somewhat indefinite term of length, by the way. At the first glance of the case, it would seem to matter little what the standard of length might be; but reflection will perhaps bring the reader into another train of thought. It is to be assumed that King Henry I had done growing when he established his arm-length standard, otherwise a source of error so palpably gross would have been introduced, that time would be thrown away in writing about it. Had King Henry I lived in these days of science, his wise men would have made him aware that a person’s limbs, even though the individual may have stopped growing, are not absolutely of the same length at all times. The arm being attached to the shoulder by a ball and socket joint, the ligaments of attachment elongate and contract, little though it be, owing to very many circumstances. France, now the model of precision in all that relates to weighing and measuring, was, at periods before the great revolution, even more embarrassed by arbitrary and ill-determined schemes of weights and measures than ourselves; the original cause of embarrassment being as follows:—In feudal times, it had been the strange custom in France for every feudal lord to establish a local measuring standard of length, equal to the length of his cane, and a

local measuring standard of volume, equal to the capacity of his wine cup; moreover, that wine cup being filled with water, the weight of the latter was regarded as what we may call the arbitrary pound. One may smile at these grotesque expedients; but smiling is often an easier matter than working out reformations. Many of us would be puzzled, were the task given to us, of deciding what should be accepted as good standards of weight and measure. To say “*weight and measure*” is almost an unnecessary waste of words. A standard of measure once determined on, the standard of weight follows as a matter of course, by taking a determined measure of some common and unchanging fluid, and decreeing that the weight of it shall be the starting-point, or unity.

No standard of measurement can be accepted as a good one, which does not afford a means of reference at all times, and which is not in itself unchanging. Supposing our present accepted yard to be the one determined by King Henry I, how could we verify its length by reference to the original standard, now that his Majesty’s arms, even the very bones of them, have long ago crumbled into dust? Reason points to the adoption of some standard length fixed by nature; but the difficulty is, how to get at it. If an orange be taken, and an ink mark be drawn quite round it, in such manner that the ink mark shall traverse the spot corresponding to where the orange has joined the stem, and the other spot at the further extremity of the orange, we shall have drawn what may be called a meridian line on the orange, and it will afford an exact similitude of a meridian line of the earth. Now, inasmuch as the dimensions of the earth are fixed and unvarying, it follows that, if we could only measure exactly the length of this meridian line, a good means would be afforded of acquiring the fixed unit of measurement for which we are seeking. To accomplish this measurement, with anything like accuracy, is a task of great difficulty; nevertheless, it has several times been done—once by the French, with the express object in view of establishing a standard of length. The present French metre, which serves as the foundation of what is now known as the metrical system of weights and measures, is assumed to be equal in length to the ten-millionth part of a quarter of a meridian line of the earth. It is too much to aver that the determination on which the standard metre is founded, is absolutely correct. Such a degree of precision it is not possible for man, in any investigation, to attain. Probably, however, the data on which the metrical system is founded are less open to the influence of disturbing errors than all others which have been substituted or proposed. Starting with the unit length, or metre, the French build up their metrical system in an extremely simple way. Small measures are accomplished through a continuous division by ten, and large measures by a continuous multiplication by ten; whereas we English multiply or divide without any fixed principles whatever. Thus, starting with the yard, for example, the draper will subdivide it into halves and quarters; whereas the carpenter divides it into three feet,

subdivides each foot into twelve inches, and each inch into eighths. As for our weights, they are puzzling beyond language to express; and the complex gradations of our money value are demonstrated by the fact that three lines are required for dealing with it—indeed, properly speaking, four; inasmuch as we can only make the halfpence and the farthings accommodate themselves to the line for pence, by setting them down in the form of vulgar fractions. Very few children are fond of arithmetic to begin with; and no wonder, considering the troubles which our irregular system of weights, measures, and money throw in their way. If we could only agree to count by tens, throughout our systems of weights, measures, and moneys, as the French do, all the uninteresting part of arithmetic would disappear. When I intimate that a French child escapes the trouble of learning compound addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division, so far at least as weights, measures, and money are concerned; that, moreover, the uninteresting dreamland of ill-defined rules, called "practice," is to a French boy unknown, enough will be said to prove the advantages of a regular system of increase and decrease for weights, measures, and money. All things considered, the grade of increase and decrease seems to be most properly fixed at *ten*, thus giving us what is properly called the "decimal system."

It needs scarcely be observed, that there is no necessary connection between the establishment of a fixed measuring unit, (the metre, for example,) and the division and multiplication of it by ten. Inasmuch as the French have adopted the latter course, however, it has been deemed proper to call attention to that subdivision.

Not until the year 1816, did we Britons begin to trouble ourselves about establishing a parliamentary standard of measurement, and collaterally of weight; though certain English philosophers, Sir Christopher Wren the most notable amongst them, had already availed themselves of the notion, first mooted by Huygens, that the length of pendulum vibrating seconds might conveniently be adopted as the starting-point of a standard measure. Every person who reads this knows, I presume, what is meant by a pendulum. Now, the pendulum of any ordinary clock is made of the proper length to vibrate once every second. Every possessor of a long clock, moreover, must be aware that the relation between the time of vibration and the length of pendulum, is fixed and invariable for one and the same place, or rather, one and the same latitude. One little matter in relation to the pendulum may not generally be taken into consideration; it is this—the vibration of it depends upon the property of weight, or heaviness. Now, the weight of a body is not absolutely the same in every part of the world. Weight (the resultant of gravitation and of centrifugal force) varies with the latitude; so that before we can accept the pendulum as an unvarying standard of measurement, we must define the distance from either pole of the earth at which the pendulum observation is made. Now, this distance north or south is only another term for

"latitude;" and hence, when a statement is made that a pendulum vibrating seconds in the latitude of London measures thirty-nine inches, *and a little bit more*—concerning the exact length of which little bit more doubt still exists—it must be understood that the statement holds good for no other latitude.

The conclusion can hardly fail to be arrived at by any person thinking about the matter of measurement standards for the first time, that it must be a much easier affair to determine the length of a pendulum vibrating seconds, than the length of a quarter of the earth's meridian. So indeed it is, up to a moderate point of accuracy. That moderate point is useless to attain, except as a means of going beyond it. The determination, to be of any use, must go beyond moderate accuracy, and there difficulties numerous and diversified begin to intervene. Account must be taken of the elevation of the pendulum above the level of the sea. The interference of atmospheric air must be removed, and allowance made for the variable expansion due to heat and cold. So difficult are all these matters, that perhaps laying down an ideal line from pole to equator, according to the manner of the French, is the simpler task.

A word now about the relation between our standard yard and the French standard metre. Both are thirty-nine English inches, and *something more*—the something more being the debateable ground. Five metres will gain on five English yards by somewhat more than an inch and a tenth, which is perhaps all that a general reader cares to know. I have already intimated that a fixed standard of volume naturally comes out of a fixed standard of weight. For example, the French litre is the capacity of a cubic vessel measuring a decimetre on each side; and, the British imperial gallon is defined by Act of Parliament to have the capacity of 277.274 cubic inches, and to hold exactly ten pounds of water.

#### THE MISSING LINK.\*

In a little volume with the above title, an account is given of a new and most interesting department of Christian labour amongst the poor of London. Female missionaries, of humbler grade and stronger constitution than the general sisterhood of district visitors, are now at work, and find their way where no other agents would be likely to gain admission. The book opens with a graphic sketch of the miserable state of St. Giles's district, physically and socially; and the following passage indicates the charitable agency to which we have referred.

St. Giles's is nothing but the sample of a vast world, unvisited and almost unvisitable by the better classes, which lies behind the screen of their respectable dwellings. The physical condition of hundreds of thousands, who rank below the decent classes in our great city, is but typical of their moral and spiritual state; and, indeed, the one reacts upon the other. Such self-respect as they

\* The Missing Link; or, Bible-Women in the Homes of the Poor. By L. N. R. Nisbet & Co.

have left is shown in keeping themselves out of sight; and they can only be reached by those who go forth diligently, after the example of their Master, "to seek and to save the lost."

Much is being done in this way by devoted clergymen and ministers, by Scripture readers, by district visitors, and by lay agency of a pastoral aid character. Many churches and chapels maintain also their own missionaries, and have their own home mission halls, in the midst of the courts and alleys around them.

A more recently established, and apparently a most effective agency, is the now well-known ragged school, which so truly begins at the beginning of the evil; inviting the unwashed and uncombed young Arabs of the streets to "come ragged, come dirty, come just as they are," to be taught, first, the use of the basin and the comb, and the pleasure of wearing a clean garment; and then to have poured into their young hearts those blessed Bible truths, all new and welcome to them, which must raise them into a grade of society above their parents, and will, by possibility, raise their parents along with them.

Still, it must have struck many an earnest heart, in the above-mentioned classes of workers, that there were depths to which their efforts never penetrated; rooms to which they were always denied admittance; moreover, that there existed home influences which perpetually defeated all theirs. "Much was doing for the children, certainly; but oh! that in past time as much had been done for the mothers!"

Places like St. Giles's have their own pride and their own reserve. They need female agency of their own, co-operative with all present missionary work, and the right beginning and root of such agency is in the service of the Word of God.

A man colporteur, with his bag of books, passing up and down the streets of St. Giles's in the months of July, August, and September, especially when the people were gone to the hay, the harvest, and the hops, and acting according to the ordinary rules of colportage, would probably have returned, saying he could make no sales, and that the people were supplied; yet, in the space of the same fourteen weeks, this experiment of female colportage, and weekly collection of pence combined, effected a sale of 174 copies—54 of them Bibles—and in the most unlikely quarters.

Domestic reforms of necessity ensued from the continuance of the Bible visits. Domestic reforms! how much needed! England is looked upon abroad as the country whose faith is founded on a Book which she wishes to give to all mankind. But while she goes forth to possess the field of the world, has she not too often forgotten her Heathen at Home?

#### FATE OF THE FRANKLIN EXPEDITION.

A DARK and painful mystery has at last been dispelled. After years of suspense, intensely exciting at first, but subsequently blunted by the lapse of time, yet still inexpressibly sorrowful, the veil has been removed which shrouded in uncertainty the

fate of the Arctic Expedition of 1845;\* and the secret of its doom has been wrested from the stern keeping of the northern ice-fields.

It is a satisfaction, though a melancholy one, to know the truth. More than twelve years ago, on the 11th of June, 1847, Sir John Franklin died, and under circumstances more pleasing than the most sanguine had ventured to indulge. He was not lost sight of in haze, tempest, or gathering darkness, which cast so dense a gloom around his fortunes, that survivors could only say, as in the case of Sir Humphrey Gilbert, "After that, we saw him no more." He did not perish by some great disaster, overwhelmed by the congealed masses of the ocean, crushed in the unrelenting arms of the Winter King, which involved his gallant crew in a common death-dealing calamity; nor did he miserably starve after shipwreck, while afloat, frost-bitten and snow-blind, upon some floe, at the mercy of the winds and waves, in the dull and lifeless region which guards the axis of the world. No; the great navigator, Bayard of the seas and shores, died the common death of man, in his cabin, while the good ship "Erebus" was still a sea-worthy vessel; and he was taken away in mercy from the evil to come, expiring before misfortunes dire befell the expedition under his command, in the wilderness of thick-ribbed ice, sleet storms, and bear tracks. Friends and comrades were around the couch of their chief in his last moments, ready to minister affectionately to his wants. Prayers were offered, and passages from the book he loved were read, while perchance holy hymns were sung, to the music of the splashing waters, the crashing bergs, and wailing winds of the polar zone. So he closed his eyes to its stern wilds, its whitened surface, and bright auroras. Now may the bells with certainty "toll for the brave, the brave, that are no more," in allusion, alas! both to the commander and his men; and the long-bereaved, high-hearted wife, determined to relieve her husband if alive, "hoping against hope," or ascertain his fate, may wear her weeds, assured of having won for herself a place in the heart of a nation, and a name in its history.

For this information we are indebted to Captain M'Clintock, already mentioned in these pages, who returned in September last from the "final search" for Franklin, in the small discovery vessel, the "Fox." This yacht, now or very recently in the East India Docks, is a round-turned screw, with nothing pretensions about her, or indicative of high achievements, and scarcely shows a scratch on her black hull, after having wintered twice in the frozen seas of the arctic circle, amid the storms which career athwart its solitudes. Ice-saws lashed to her sides, and heavy handspikes, iron-pointed at each end, tell of work to be done, and dangers to be encountered, which are unknown in English waters. M'Clintock had been out on the same errand before, as a subordinate under Captain Austen, in 1850-51, during which he distinguished himself by a remarkable sledge-journey of three hundred and sixty miles in a direct line. It led

\* For notices of former Arctic Expeditions, see "*Leisure Hour*," Nos. 1, 7, 9, 50, 100, 106, 107.



him to the spot where Sir Edward Parry passed the winter of 1820-21, where interesting traces of the sojourn were found, after an interval of thirty years, during which the place had been abandoned to bears, foxes, musk-oxen, reindeer, and ptarmigans. On a mass of sandstone an inscription was quite fresh, containing the names of the ships "Hecla" and "Griper," with the date of the visit.

The "Fox" left our shores on what seemed to many a hopeless errand, in the year 1857, and speedily reached the lands of which it has been said—

"The earth is rock—the heaven  
The dome of a greater palace of ice.  
Dull light distils through frozen skies,  
Thickened and gross. Cold fancy droops her wings,  
And cannot range. In winding-sheets of snow  
Lies every thought of any pleasant thing.  
I have forgotten the green earth—  
My heart assumes the landscape of mine eyes,  
Moveless and white, chill blanched with heaviest rime.  
The sun himself is heavy and lacks cheer;  
Or on the eastern hill, or western slope,  
The world without seems far and long ago."

The first winter was passed in the pack-ice of Davis's Strait, with which the ship drifted upwards of a thousand miles. Disentangled on the 25th of April, 1858, the small Danish settlement of Holsteinburg, in South Greenland, was visited for such scanty supplies as the place afforded. The kindred settlements of Godhaven and Upernivik, in North Greenland, were next reached. At the former of these, on Disco Island, the centre of an important fishery, the last letters received from Franklin and his crew were written. The latter, in latitude 72° 48', is the most northerly permanent little town in the world.

On starting fairly for the scene of search, but very slow progress was made, owing to the unusual accumulation of ice in the northern part of Baffin's Bay; and the vessel could not have pushed on at all without the aid of steam-power. At Pond's Inlet, gained on the 27th of July, an old Esquimaux woman and boy were met with, who served as guides to their village. The people were most friendly and communicative, but knew nothing of the lost vessels, nor had any tidings of wrecks reached them for the last twenty or thirty years. At Beechy Island, where, it will be recollected, discovery was made by Captain Ommaney, of the Austen expedition, that Franklin had passed the winter of 1845-6, then vanishing from the knowledge of mankind, a handsome marble tablet was landed on the 11th of August, sent out by Lady Franklin for the purpose, bearing an appropriate inscription to the memory of her husband and his crews. The rest of the month, with the greater part of September, was spent in running down Prince Regent's Inlet, and passing through Bellot Strait, the western outlet of which was found to be firmly closed with ice, which had withstood the violence of the autumnal gales, though free water was seen at the distance of a few miles across the barrier. There was no alternative, therefore, but to retire, and look out for winter quarters, owing to the advance of the season. They were found in a snug harbour at the eastern entrance of the strait, which received the name of Port Kennedy, after that of a predecessor in the same waters.

Bellot Strait commemorates a gallant lieutenant of the French navy, who went out with Mr. Kennedy in the "Prince Albert," and again with Captain Inglefield in the screw-steamer "Isabel," on which occasion he perished by a casualty on the ice, another victim to arctic perils. An obelisk to his memory stands by Greenwich Hospital.

The winter was unusually cold and stormy. But scarcely had the sun begun to peep above the horizon, terminating the long darkness, when Captain M'Clintock, accompanied by Mr. Petersen, a Danish gentleman who speaks Esquimaux thoroughly, left the vessel on a short preparatory tour. The party travelled with two sledges drawn by dogs, and started on the 17th of February, 1859, proceeding in a southerly direction towards the magnetic pole. This spot, on the western coast of Boothia, was first reached by Sir James Ross, June 1, 1831, at eight o'clock in the morning, who found the amount of the dip of the magnetic needle to be 89° 59', only one minute less than 90°, the vertical position, which would have precisely indicated the polar station. It is an unattractive site along the coast, rising into ridges from fifty to sixty feet high, about a mile inland. The wish expressed by the discoverer was natural, that a place so important had possessed more of mark or note; but Nature had erected no monument to denote the spot which she had chosen as the centre of one of her "great and dark powers." A cairn of some magnitude was erected by the adventurers, upon which the British flag was planted, and underneath a canister was buried containing a record of the interesting enterprise. It was fortunate that M'Clintock travelled in this direction, for near Cape Victoria, some miles south of the magnetic pole, he fell in with a party of natives in possession of undoubted relics obtained from Franklin's vessels. They told him that several years ago a ship was crushed by the ice off the northern point of a great island, answering in position to our King William's Island; but that all her people had landed safely, and gone away to the Great Fish River, where they died. The tribe was well supplied with wood, got from a boat, they said, left by the "starving white men," on the Great River. Excited by this intelligence, the party returned to the "Fox," to prepare to follow up the clue by more extended journeys, but were much exhausted by hard marching, and the terrible temperature, often 71° below the freezing point.

"Cold! cold! there is no sun in heaven,  
A heavy and uniform cloud  
Overspreads the face of the sky,  
And the snows are beginning to fall.  
All waste! no sign of life  
But the track of the wolf and the bear;  
No sound but the wild, wild wind,  
And the snow crunching under his feet."

So scanty were the resources of the country, that notwithstanding the efforts of expert sportsmen, through a period of eleven months, only eight reindeer, two bears, eighteen seals, with a few waterfowl and ptarmigans, had been obtained. Though Providence, which tempers the wind to the shorn lamb, enables some land quadrupeds to brave with impunity the rigour of a polar winter, yet vast tracts are utterly solitary, and everywhere the cries of ani-

mal life are few and far between. This dreariness led M. B  r to think, when at a corresponding latitude, of the state of nature on the morning of creation, just before animals were called into existence.

In a few weeks, the searching party was ready for long spring journeys, and again the neighbourhood of Cape Victoria was visited. Here two native families were met with, living out upon the ice in snow huts. Counselling by experience, the Esquimaux construct houses of this description for winter dwellings; and they are best adapted to protect them from the tremendous cold. Snow is so perfect a non-conductor of heat, that the burning of a common candle in one of these huts creates a perceptible increase of temperature; and the heat derived from the flame of spirits of wine sufficient to boil a tea-kettle, diffuses an agreeable warmth, in relation at least to the temperature without, which is felt for the rest of the night. From these natives it was gathered that another ship had been seen off King William's Island, and that she drifted ashore on the fall of the same year. Thus the second of Franklin's vessels was accounted for. The party now divided, Captain McClintock proceeding in one direction, and Lieutenant Hobson in another, each with a sledge drawn by four men, and an auxiliary sledge drawn by six dogs. We follow in the first instance the course of the former.

While marching along the east coast of King William's Island, a snow village was reached on the 8th of May, near Cape Norton, containing about thirty inhabitants. They showed no signs of fear or shyness, though probably they had never seen living white men before. They willingly also communicated all they knew, and bartered their goods, but would have stolen everything had not their movements been closely watched. Many relics of our unfortunate countrymen were purchased from them; among others some silver spoons and forks, which were identified by the crests and markings as the property of Sir John Franklin, Lieutenants Fairholm, and Le Vescomte. These all belonged to the "Erebus." There was also a silver medal obtained by Assistant-Surgeon Mr. A. Macdonald, as a prize for superior attainments, at a medical examination in Edinburgh, April, 1838. He belonged to the "Terror." Of this gentleman we remarked in this journal, in 1854, that his name, written on a scrap of paper, probably the fragment of a letter, found on Beechy Island in 1850, was the only relic of the lost ones, admitting of personal identification, that had then been met with, little imagining that his prize medal would turn up. Pointing to an inlet, the natives said that one day's march up it, and thence four days overland, brought them to the wreck. None of them, however, had been there since 1857-8, at which time but little remained, their countrymen having carried almost everything away. Most of this information was derived by Mr. Petersen from an intelligent old woman, who stated that many of the white men dropped by the way as they went to the Great River; but this was only known to them some time afterwards, when their bodies were discovered.

Alas! this dropping by the way was no wilful fiction or imaginative dream, but a terrible reality.

Evidence of the truth of the statement was found on the southern shore of King William's Island, some ten miles eastward of Cape Herschel, where a bleached skeleton was met with on the 24th of May, with fragments of European clothing around it. Upon carefully removing the snow, a small leathern pocket-book was discovered, which fell to pieces upon being thawed and dried. It contained a few letters, which, though much decayed, may yet be deciphered, a sixpence, dated 1831, and a half sovereign, dated 1844. There was also the tie of a black silk handkerchief, a scrap of a coloured cotton shirt, and a small clothes brush. Judging from the remains of the dress, the body appeared to be that of a steward, or officer's servant. Benumbed with cold, reduced by hardships, or debilitated by scurvy, the hapless one had staggered to the spot, where he was brought to a final halt by the overpowering incidents of his position, and fell prostrate in the arms of death, while the wild wind sung his requiem, and the snow storms wore his shroud.

Turn we now to Lieutenant Hobson. Upon separating from his commanding officer, he proceeded in the direction of Cape Felix, and fell in with a very large cairn, a short distance to the westward of it. Close adjoining were three small tents, with blankets, old clothes, and other relics of a shooting or a magnetic station. But although the cairn was carefully examined, and the ground around it ransacked, no record was discovered. Two broken bottles were found amongst some stones, which may have contained documents, destroyed or carried away by the Esquimaux. Among the clothing there was a stocking marked W., and the fragment of another marked W. S. Two small cairns were subsequently met with in the neighbourhood, but they yielded nothing of importance. The 6th of May brought with it an interesting revelation obtained from a large cairn on Point Victory. Lying among some loose stones which had fallen from the top, a small tin case was found, containing a paper inscribed as follows:—

"25th April, 1848. H. M. Ships 'Erebus' and 'Terror' were deserted on the 22nd April, 6 leagues N.N.W. of this, (Point Victory,) having been beset since 12th Sept. 1846. The officers and crews, consisting of 105 souls, under the command of Captain F. R. M. Crozier, landed here in lat. 69° 37' 42" N. long. 98° 4' 15" W. Sir John Franklin died on the 11th June, 1847, and the total loss by deaths in the expedition has been to this date 9 officers and 15 men.

"F. R. Crozier,

"Captain and Senior Officer.

"James Fitzjames, Captain, H.M.S. 'Erebus,'

"Start on to-morrow, 26th, for Back's Fish River."

A second record was found a few miles to the southward, but it contained no additional information, being of earlier date, deposited by a party from the ice-beset ships. It is affecting to remember, that in about a fortnight after the "All well" of the paper was written, Franklin was no more.

"H. M. Ships 'Erebus' and 'Terror,'

"26th May, 1847. { Wintered in the ice, in  
Lat. 70° 1' N. long. 98° 29' W.

"Having wintered in 1846-7 [mistake for 1845-6] at Beechy Island, in lat. 74° 43' 28" N. long. 91° 39' 15" W., after having ascended Wellington Channel to lat. 77°, and returned by the west side of Cornwallis Island.

"Sir John Franklin commanding the expedition.

"All well,

"Whoever finds this paper is requested to forward it to the Secretary of the Admiralty, London, with a note of the time and place at which it was found; or, if more convenient, to deliver it for that purpose to the British Consul at the nearest port.

(The same in French, Spanish, Dutch, Danish, and German.)

"Party, consisting of two officers and six men, left the ships on Monday, 24th May, 1847.

"G. M. Gore, Lieut.

"Chas. F. Des Vaux, Mate."

It thus appears that, after having been beleaguered by the ice from September 12, 1846, through the whole of 1847, to April 22, 1848, upwards of nineteen months, the ships were deliberately abandoned by their crews, hopeless of their being extricated. After the desertion, according to native reports, one vessel was crushed and sunk, while the other was forced ashore, where she became an almost inexhaustible mine of wealth to the Esquimaux. The scene of the disaster was indicated with remarkable precision, some years ago, by Captain Richards, R.N., an officer well acquainted with the mazy channels and frozen shores of the northern waters. "Both sides of Peel Channel," he wrote, "as high as King William's Island and Gateshead Island, must be explored. If the ships, or their wrecks, are not found there—and I think they will be—continue the search up both sides of King William's Island to Montreal Island, at the embouchure of the Great Fish River." It was a capital error, on the part of Franklin, that, after breaking up from his first winter quarters, for a bold dash into Prince Regent's Inlet, he raised no monument on either shore to indicate his route. He must have passed through it in the early summer of 1846, and the very first expedition sent out in search of him, under Sir James Ross, was there in 1848-9, wintering on the western side of the entrance. Had a solitary cairn been erected, it would have been found by his exploring parties, and have put navigators upon the true track, though perhaps not in time to reach any of the lost wanderers while alive, and prevent starvation from executing its stern office.

At the landing-place of the mariners, a large quantity of clothing and stores lay strewed about, as if here every article was thrown away which could possibly be dispensed with—pickaxes, shovels, boats, cooking utensils, ironwork, ropes, blocks, canvas, oars, a small medicine chest, and a sextant, engraved "Frederick Hornby, R.N." He was a lieutenant and first mate on board the "Terror." Possibly, unconscious how far their strength had been reduced, till tried by the toils and privations of the march, the band of 105 gallant fellows set out for the Great Fish River. This stream, broken by numerous falls, flows through a north-easterly part of the American continent, a most desolate and difficult country, and enters a gulf of the Arctic Ocean. It was first explored by Sir George Back, in 1834, when engaged in the search for Sir John Ross. The distance by sledge route, from the position where the ships were abandoned to its mouth, off which lies Montreal Island, is about 220 geographical miles. Whether any of the party struggled on so far as to reach it, none can say.

We would fain follow the tramp of the dauntless band over the blinding snow, but cannot; nor is anything known respecting the circumstances

of their fate, beyond the general result. Overcome in the grapple with unrelenting fridity; starved, emaciated, exhausted, *they dropped by the way*, one after another, till the last man perished. But some seventy miles from the starting-point a boat was discovered, mounted on a sledge, apparently intended for the ascent of the river. In it were two human skeletons, with a considerable quantity of clothing. One of the skeletons lay in the after part of the vessel, under a pile of clothing; the other was in the bow, and had been much disturbed, as if by animals. Two double-barrelled guns stood upright against the boat's side, precisely as they were placed eleven years before. One barrel in each was loaded and cocked, and there was abundance of ammunition. The boat likewise contained tea, chocolate, and tobacco, watches and silver plate, a small prayer-book, the cover of a book of family prayers, a small Bible, interlined in many places and with numerous references written in the margin, a New Testament in the French language, and a book of Christian melodies, inscribed within the cover to "G. G." We dwell with mournful pleasure upon the possession of articles of this kind, as showing that, unutterably sorrowful as was the earthly fate of the owners, they had a sure guide with them to a "better country, that is, a heavenly!" and we may hope that, while forlorn, friendless, and helpless, lying in an open boat, exposed to the biting blast and pelting storm, they were cheered in the dark hour of their last agony by

"The lamp that can illuminate the grave."

The initials G. G. are those of Graham Gore, first lieutenant on board the "Erebus," who was out with Sir James Ross in the Antarctic expedition. In the last letter sent home by his superior, Captain Fitzjames, written to a lady, he described him as "a man of great stability of character, a very good officer, plays dreadfully well upon the flute, has the sweetest of tempers, and is altogether a capital fellow."

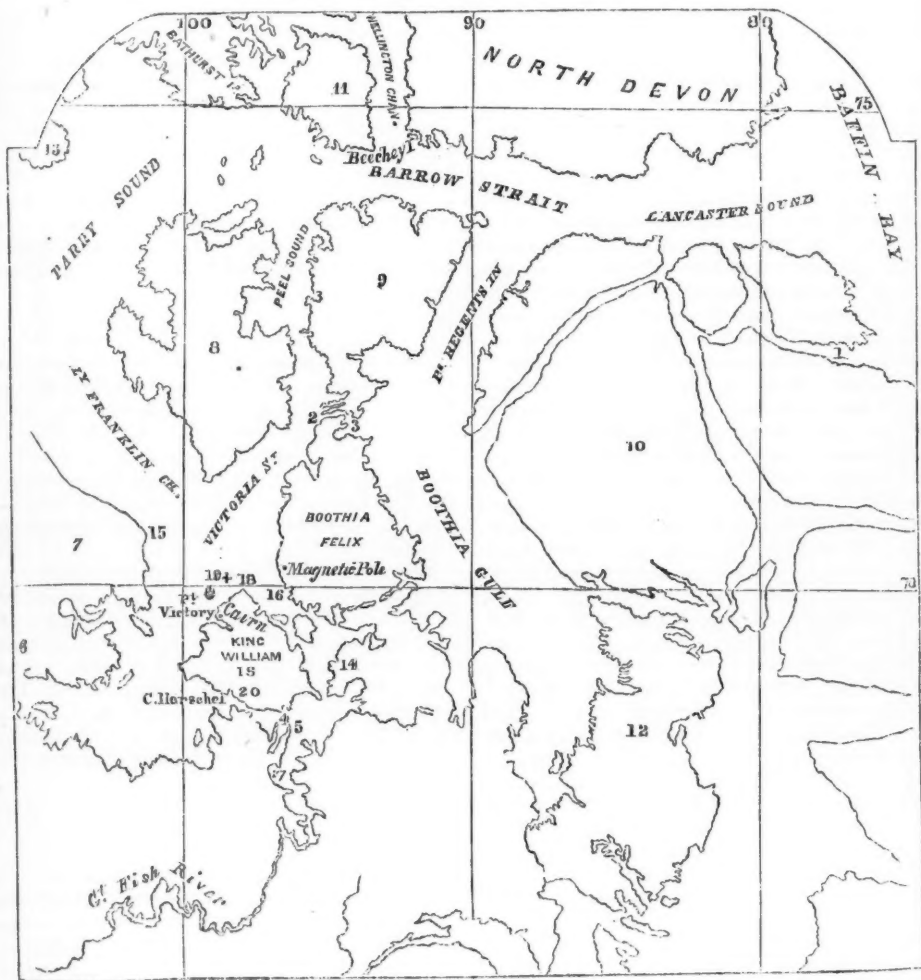
The fate of Franklin having been ascertained, and, by inference, that of his comrades, there was no end to be gained, worth the effort, in visiting the few relics of the wreck, if any remained upon the beach; and Captain McClintock wisely returned to his ship, which had all the while lain at Port Kennedy. From thence he started on the homeward voyage, in August, and reached England on the 21st of September, to startle the nation with his tidings.

We now close a very mournful tale, doubtless the last of the kind which we shall have to record. If, as a maritime nation, we must occasionally lose highly accomplished naval officers and experienced seamen, let it be on the broad commercial highway of the ocean, not in the region where its waters solidify, and nature offers obstacles to progress too strong for man to overcome; or where, if any advance rewards the indomitable hardihood of the navigator, there is no purpose of science, commerce, or humanity answered by it. We cannot afford to sacrifice such men as those who went out in the "Erebus" and "Terror," or even a single

life, in attempts to thread the mazes of an inhospitable archipelago, where the many-coloured auroras may be bright and beautiful aloft, but where, below, no cereals will ever flourish, no civilized population be planted, and only the hardiest animals can live, whose cries occasionally mingle with the report of the icebergs, as they split with the roar of a thousand cannon, and send off from their reeling bases the sounding swell to the neighbouring strand. Had the money expended upon north-western expeditions to dreary solitudes been devoted to such missions as those in which Livingstone is engaged, the benighted millions of interior Africa would long ago have been familiar with "the sound of the church-going bell;" and its cotton might have found its way to the

quays of Liverpool and the factories of Manchester. But it is best to let bygones be bygones, for the folly is not likely to be repeated. For this last cruise we are bound to be thankful. As a tribute of respect to the dead, it has been crowned with complete success; and it was but just to inquire concerning their bones. Long will it be remembered with admiration, as the effort of an illustrious wife, Lady Franklin, who, when governments were cold, collected the remains of her fortune, after a large previous expenditure, and devoted them to the task of either rescuing her husband, or solving the problem of his doom. We know the result; and to poets it may now be left to celebrate the wild romance of the modern Odyssey, and sing the praises of the Penelope of England.

REFERENCE MAP OF THE ARCTIC EXPLORATIONS.



1. Pond's Inlet.
2. Bellot Strait.
3. Point Kennedy.
4. Barrow's Inlet.
5. Point Ogle.
6. Collinson's furthest point; presumed N. W. Passage.

7. Victoria Land.
8. Prince of Wales' Island.
9. North Somerset.
10. Cockburn Land.
11. Cornwallis Land.
12. Melville Peninsula.
13. Melville Island.

14. Rac's furthest point in his search (1854).
15. Collinson's ditto, May 10, 1853.
16. Cape Victoria.
17. Montreal Island.
18. Cape Felix.
19. Franklin's ships blocked up in 1846.
20. Boat and skeletons found (1850).